

624 leader of all." But it was of Two Mountain's brother, Cold, that That's It waxed enthusiastic, for Cold was a famous war chief. Of his exploits one could talk for hours. According to our information, a peace chief was a man whose raiding days were over. Dr. Mirsky was informed that some peace chiefs did take to the war path, and when they did so, established an interesting rule by proxy through the chief's wife aided by the chief's formal friend in the "brotherhood bond." The reputed words of the peace chief to his announcer and to his *hais* (formal friend) would be these, "Look here, my friends, here is my wife. Pitch your tents close to hers, so that you may tell the rest of the people what you intend to do. She has full instructions. I have left all my plans with her. I want you to help her carry them out. She knows everything I want done and how I want it done—and she will tell you."³ Such a practice would have been of most unusual occurrence. Aside from its not having been recorded in the investigations of the Santa Fe Laboratory Field Group, it does not fit comfortably into the Comanche setting. It may be noted, in this respect, that *hais* were reputedly always together when one of them took to the war path.

Some tendency to hereditary succession is found in the Comanche lines of leadership. Sons of chiefs became chiefs with more than average frequency. This is not due to any established rule of hereditary succession, but results from the fact that sons of chiefs, by virtue of the training and examples set by their fathers and expectancy of high standards within their families (biological factors cannot be determined), attained the qualities of the chieftain. Competition was open. Chiefship was granted on performance solely. Chiefly excellence appears to have run to some degree in paternal family lines.

The observation made on the Comanches nearly a hundred years ago by Josiah Gregg is essentially correct, "When a chief becomes old and careworn, he exercises but the 'civil authority' of his clan (sic); while his son, if deemed worthy, otherwise some distinguished brave, assumes by 'common consent' the functions of war chief."⁴

³ Mirsky, *Field Notes*.

⁴ Josiah Gregg, *The Commerce of the Prairies* (Cleveland, 1906), p. 343; in G. R. Thwaites, *Early Western Travels* (vol. 20, pt. 2).

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[681] of guilt by an accused (except in sorcery) was so uncommon that there are not cases enough to draw sound conclusions.

Cases were opened with formal politeness and smooth words; the man who had come to prosecute addressed the one he was about to accuse as "brother."⁷ While the defendant listened, he was told why the accuser had come as prosecutor and informed what must be given in damages to satisfy his visitor. Inasmuch as the defendant usually knew what had called forth the visit, the prosecutor was not invited into the tipi to take the seat of the guest of honor opposite the door. Ordinarily the defendant was sitting beside the door of his tipi as the prosecuting party arrived, and the negotiations took place before the tipi.

The aggrieved usually stated his demand for damages specifically, but the damages rendered were those which the defendant agreed to give and the aggrieved was willing to accept. "Willingness," with either or both, could of course be anything but willing. There was no judge to determine what should be paid in composition for the wrong, nor was there any specific customary code regulating payments in accordance with degree of wrong. Consequently, only by agreement could the case be settled. Without the aid of an arbitrator, the sole way to agreement was bargain.

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517 The factors which operated in the process of settlement were manifold and delicate, each factor having many shades and facets. Who can say what the forces shaping the attitudes which determine the actions of any individual in any special circumstance may be? It is clear, however, that the will to push or resist was of greatest moment. Sometimes the defendant acquiesced only too willingly to the first demands made upon him. Sometimes the prosecutor placed a timid request for compensation, which he accepted with a sign of relief, glad that the thing was done. It is in this very will to push or to resist that the personal factor entered and resists reduction to written words. Nevertheless, personal courage and aggressiveness were the potent traits which counted in the Comanche male. Each party mentally weighed the other and decided accordingly, most of this being done before any action recounted in a story could occur. The one outstanding factor around which the settlement of a dispute turned was not the question of the right or wrong of the situation, but rather the relative bravery in warfare of the two parties involved. A reputation as a doughty slayer of enemies was a handy thing. The real point was that in Comanche law, as in all law, the ultimate power was resort to force. But

[608] ⁷ In Shoshone and Comanche theory, men who had shared a woman sexually were supposed to be brothers. For a discussion of the brother terminology and its relation to Shoshone-Comanche marriage practices, see E. A. Hoebel, *Comanche and H3kandika Shoshone Relationship Systems*, pp. 448-449.

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C (a la automobile) but not on the same seat. John maintains that this
602 no longer holds for his own children and that brothers and sisters
598 will even dance together. However, I have never seen any of his
178 children break these strictures.

C While preadolescents frequently break tabus, this is to be
K expected from the examples of indulgence afforded in the earlier days.
858 The preadolescent had not yet come of age and was not considered
178 responsible or even capable of comprehending the total network of
responsibilities and strictures which he would have to follow as an
adult.

C The range of recognized kin seems to have shrunk considerably
K for those younger than about 45 years. This is probably due in part
602 to the fact that the ideal marriage cannot be adhered to and the
178 resultant mix ups tend to confuse the younger generations (in its
C turn due to a less clear settlement pattern?). Claim relationships
K also seem to confuse the younger people who do not wish to be bound
608 by them. To be so bound would certainly restrict the choice of a
[508] marriage partner to the nth degree although I do not think this is
C a motivating factor in the minds of the individuals concerned. The
K [178] young people do not make claim relatives as did their parents. On
the other hand, a claim relative of the parents or grand parents who
keeps close contact with the family will be recognized and honored
C by the young people. The practice of inheriting a claim relative
K [408] after an older person's death is most often considered a great nuisance.

Factionalism

C The conflict in primitive societies coming into contact with
K technologically superior cultures, between assimilationists and tradi-
177 tionalists has been proposed elsewhere (Redfield 1953). I have been
186 attempting to determine whether this tension may be observed today and,
if so, whether it can be helpful in coming to understand the faction-
alism of the Plains Tribes.

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C one of the younger separationists is drawing closer to the Peyotists
665 to gain support. The result is that in order to maintain any semblance
745 of unity and brotherly love in the Peyote meeting John and his
"brothers" must withdraw from the political arena. /38/ Whether
C this withdrawal is successful may be questioned. I also wonder
K how real the brotherhood of the Peyote community really is. But
745 such is the ideal and it determines actions to an extent. One must
C also ask how strong the claim relationship of "friend" and "brother"
K is. It is certainly a formality in many instances. But I have heard
608 of cases where the formality was kept up in spite of many aggravating
512 situations only to be discarded after a tribal act on the part of
one of the parties involved.

C Granting that generalities are premature, some things do
K strike me as peculiar to the situation, that is some reactions to
665 rivalries, competition, or whatever, are not what one would expect
of our culture. The present factioing may be traced back in part
to a rivalry between two young men. One a Comanche the other a
C Kiowa. It has been noted that much of the lining up of the sides is
K determined by kinship and claim relationship ties. Something small
[602] may grow into something big. Similar situations have been recorded
[608] for other plains tribes in other periods. What does impress me is
the tendency to splinter, to withdraw. Rather than a cooperative
effort on the part of two or more opposition groups ending in decisive
action, there is instead a multiplying of opposition groups, less
C action and more talk. This, in spite of the fact that the frustrations
K of contact with the white world might also be expected to develop a
745 degree of concerted reaction to annoying problems. In any event
665 further investigation must ask whether the present situation is one
of long standing and if so whether it is due to the pressures of the
White culture and/or the nature of the native culture itself.

POLYGAMY IN COMANCHE COUNTRY

43

In Comanche society, once a woman left her father's camp she must of necessity become a wife. There was not another nook or cranny of Comanche society into which she could crowd herself. There were no avocations open to her. Prostitution and concubinage were not countenanced, and the enslavement of an unattached Comanche woman by another Comanche was completely unthinkable. (An example of the length to which a Comanche's obligation to respect the rights of other Comanches extended may be seen in the situation of the semiwild dogs that infested every camp. These dogs were not pets—they were parasites. But they could be neither killed nor mistreated. They were relatives of the coyote; and since the coyote was a relative of the Comanche, one had as well abuse another Comanche as one of these semiwild dogs.)

Provision for widows was made in this manner: if a man was killed, or if he died from disease, his wives became the wives of his brother or brothers, and his children became the children of his brother or brothers. There was also a relationship known as blood brotherhood, in which two men mingled their blood together. Such a blood brother could succeed as the husband of his deceased blood brother's wives.

During the more than five years when I was among the Comanches and was dealing with them, I became sold on polygamy as a way of life for them. They made it work. After twenty-six years of peace, there continued to be a much larger number of women than men. Though all but three of the old warrior group that I knew had more than one wife, and a number had three or more, I knew of no single man in that age group. Neither were there surplus unattached women. And women must have outnumbered men in the age group of forty-five years and over, by considerably more than two to one.

As nearly as I was able to discover, the multiple wife situation was a development rather than the result of a plan. A man did not decide he was going to have two, three, or more wives and go out and purchase the number he had decided upon. He started modestly, as a young warrior, with the purchase of one wife. Then as he prospered, gained a reputation, and accumulated a horse herd and maybe a baby or two, the work would become too heavy for one wife. Obviously they couldn't secure a hired girl, so they looked around and probably decided between them who would make a satisfactory and agreeable number two wife. When possible, a younger sister of the number